

845 /99 cont. /

asked to utter and write spells to hasten the womb. After the infant is born the cord is cut with a pair of scissors and the placenta is buried in the ground in the house or outside.

After childbirth a Miao woman drinks several bowls of cold water for the purpose of purifying her blood. Within three days she goes out to the fields to work. There are cases in which a woman gives birth in the forenoon and goes out to work in the afternoon. It is said that the Miao woman is able to do this by eating a secret herb. For postnatal nourishment the poor eat eggs and the rich eat chicken.

Recently, the Miao have adopted the Chinese custom of inviting friends and relatives to a feast and naming ceremony on the third day after a child's birth. A name is sometimes adopted according to the time of birth. For instance, if a child is born in a certain month, it would be named after the month. The chief of the Miao at the time of the rebellion during the reign of Emperor Ch'ien Lung was called Wu pa-yüeh /Wu, Eighth Month/. Sometimes the name of the season when the birth occurred is adopted. In another case, the weight of the infant may be used as the name, for instance, an infant weighing so many chin at birth will be named for that weight. In still other cases, the name of an animal, a pig, goat, sheep, dog, or cow is used in the belief that the child will be easy to raise.

There is no definite time for feeding the baby. Generally when the baby cries it is fed. If the mother has no milk, the baby is then fed with sugar and rice. At the time of teething, if the first tooth emerges in the upper jaw, it is a sign of ill omen, portending the death of one of the parents or paternal grandparents, because the Miao believe that such a tooth is a grave-digging hoe.

/100/ A pregnant unmarried girl often produces an abortion by swallowing mercury. Illegitimate infants are often drowned. Properly married couples rarely practice abortion or infanticide.

the womb again. After this any child born is sure to grow into manhood. The decapitation and butchering have to be done before the child breathes his last. When the parents perceive that the illness of the child is identical to that of the other deceased children, /92/ they expect him to die, and taking advantage of his still being alive they cut off his head and legs. Otherwise, they believe, the prevention would not be effective. It is said that some ignorant Chinese in the same locality also follow this custom.

(10) Hair Preservation. When a child of the Miao-I is born the parents invariably ask a fortune-teller to outline his life's destiny. If his destiny is not good, then his hair is allowed to grow until he is six or twelve years old when he has his first haircut. The long unshaved hair is said to help preserve the life of the child. The first haircut is an occasion for great celebration: every household in the village would hang out red and green festoons and send greetings to the parents, who in turn would give a party, killing chicken and pig for a great feast.

(11) The Small Horse Image. If a child among the Ch'ing Miao cries all night without stop, the parents would attribute the cause of the trouble to the passing by of the "sky horse", a colloquial name for the locust. They would hang on the door a straw-wrapped bowl filled with rice and water, and little images of horses cut from the bark of a tree. This would stop the cry of the child.

(12) Throwing Water and Rice. When a Miao-I first becomes ill, the general assumption is that he has run into some starving ghost. The family immediately burns a bunch of unhusked rice and lights incense and candles in a bowl of rice immersed in water. This bowl is carried

Akha A04
Meau AE5

/59 cont. /

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The situation is similar among the Akha. A conscious separation of the sexes does not take place until the beginning of puberty.

Nevertheless, there are games that are preferred by the one or the other sex. Boys, for instance, do not play with dolls, and girls avoid games requiring strength, since they would always lose to the boys. Similarly, girls automatically avoid games involving the use of weapons, which they do not learn how to handle. In such cases there is a natural separation into definite groups. Other games, however, such as the game of cooking, are equally popular among both sexes.

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The first toys given to infants when they are from six to eight months old are generally small bells, coins, or colorful fruits. Among the Akha there are in addition tassels made of wool or monkey hair, which the mother dangles enticingly before the eyes of the child and then gives to him when he has become aware of them. Already at the age of three years, the children of the Meau and Akha, who develop earlier than European children, look for all kinds of toys for themselves. Utilitarian objects used by the adults are preferred, but they also play with little sticks, which are collected in the forest by older children, attached to strings, and swung back and forth.

With the exception of the toys for infants, the Meau parents rarely make playthings for the children, but under the guidance of their older siblings or other relatives the children are soon in a position to make their own toys, especially wooden tops and cloth balls. Both Meau and Akha children like to knead clay into animal and human figures (Ill. 65)² and to use the same material to build doll houses, in which the clay dolls or simply little sticks live. The little four- to six-year-old Meau girls like to plait wreaths of flowers with which they adorn themselves (Ill. 68)², or they make themselves necklaces out of the colorful dried berries and fruits of the forest for the same purpose.

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The Akha children are given toys by their parents. /60/
The father carefully carves a small crossbow (Ill. 17) or bow and arrow; the mother makes dolls out of old rags and wood. The

¹ [See cat. 116, p 471 - ANALYST]
² [See cat 116, p 511 - ANALYST]

AKha AO4
Miao AE5.

/82/

7. Mental Development

A . . . Unfortunately I was unable to test adequately either the
 M children of the Akha or those of the Meau. A number of diffi-
 114 culties blocked this, especially the shortage of porters, which
 125 did not permit moving our test material. Moreover my test
 145 forms were designed for the mental world of primitives and
 could not be applied without further ado to a mountain people
 of Farther India with the mental capacity of the Akha, much
 less that of the Meau. It would have been necessary to revise
 my test forms, but we did not have the time to do this, espe-
 cially since our funds were limited.

A According to our observations, however, the children of
 M the Meau are more highly developed and surpass those of all
 157 the mountain tribes of Further India, including the Akha. Par-
 856 ticularly striking among the Meau is a marked individualism,
 or rather a strong differentiation in comparison with the other
 tribes mentioned, which is already apparent even in small chil-
 dren. At the age of four or five distinct differences of charac-
 ter and talent are already evident. The Meau children begin
 153 to talk when they are one year old, those of the Akha some-
 856 what later; at this age they are already able to say "father"
 and "mother" and a few other words. There are, however,
 some gifted children who speak even earlier and some without
 talent who are hardly this far at the age of two. One can
 say, however that at an average age of three and a half years
 the language of the children is almost equal to that of the
 adults.

At the age of two the children are not yet able to eat
 by themselves; they learn this during their third year. The
 A Meau children begin asking questions at the age of five, those
 M of the Akha at the age of six. The children of the Meau do
 153 not bother to think up explanations of their own for things that
 861 are unknown to them, but rather in each and every case ask
 157 their parents or other adults of their community, and in this
 respect they are decidedly vivacious and active. The children
 of the Akha are less persistent in this questioning than those of

AKha AD4
Miao AE5

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[157] the Meau. If they do not receive an adequate or satisfactory answer, they soon go on to something else. They themselves never try to explain unfamiliar things; on the otherhand, /83/ with strangers they are more active and less self-conscious in their questioning than the Meau children, who, to be sure, are curious, but remain shyly in the background.

Most of the children ask many questions, but there are also some who ask few. They want an explanation for everything that is inexplicable to them. They ask why the trees grow, who makes the rice, what kind of spirits there are, why the dog barks, why the father goes hunting, why one hurts himself when he falls down, why birds fly, and so forth. The adults attempt to answer these questions truthfully and to the best of their ability, but sometimes they themselves are at a loss. If they are unable to answer a question, they say: "Oh, you already know more than I do, why do you ask me?"

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145 As far as learning ability is concerned, the Meau children, according to my observations, are extremely gifted; in my estimation, at least up to the age of six they are hardly less gifted than European children of the same age. The Akha children are somewhat less gifted. In all practical aspects and in the use of their bodies, the children of the Meau and Akha are more skillful and especially more persevering and much tougher than children of the Schan /Shan/ and Lao at the same age.

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[871] Comparisons with European children in school could not be made, since in northern Thailand neither the Meau nor Akha children visit any schools. Besides, there were no European children there as a basis for comparison.

8. Art in the Life of Children

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[534] The musical instruments of the adults (see the chapter, "Art," section on "Music and Musical Instruments") are precious and are not given to the children. I could not find any instruments for children, not even any that could be regarded as relics on the path of the development of the art. At most it